

Eastern Illinois University The Keep

2004

Press Releases

9-1-2004

09/01/2004 - President Lou Hencken Speaks To Faculty At Luncheon.pdf

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2004

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "09/01/2004 - President Lou Hencken Speaks To Faculty At Luncheon.pdf" (2004).
2004. 42.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2004/42

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2004 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

President Lou Hencken Speaks to EIU Faculty at Annual Welcome Back Luncheon

Sep-01-2004

I would like to welcome back all returning faculty to the University and a special welcome to the 53 faculty who have joined our ranks. I am pleased to note that we continue to add diversity to our faculty. It is my expectation that all departments across campus will continue their efforts to recruit highly qualified, diverse applicants. I truly believe that the strength and vitality of our campus is enhanced when we attract students, faculty, and staff from around the nation - indeed the world.

I get very excited as the campus seems to come to life at the beginning of the school year when the students and faculty return to campus.

As I walk around this campus, I am amazed again about the lawns and flowers. Many people have commented to me about how nice the lawns and flower beds are. A special personality is added to the campus because of the beauty of these flowers.

I have used this occasion in the past to review some of our many achievements and discuss plans for the coming year. This past year, we had a number of accomplishments for which we should all be pleased. In the area of fundraising, the University received \$3.86 million, compared to \$2.66 million the previous year and 2.24 the year before that. We were successful in reconnecting with a large number of "lost alumni." With declining state resources, the importance of fundraising and of maintaining our relationship with alums is evident.

We received a record number of applications for admission. Our goal was 3,000 new students. When the 10-day enrollment figures are released, I am confident we will have accomplished that goal. Plus, our enrollment will also show an increase as we continue our "controlled growth" - not taking more students than we have resources to accommodate.

For the fourth year, we are one of the top schools in the *U.S. News and World Report*. They combined the first and second reporting categories this year so there are many more schools in the top tier than before. Despite that, of their list of the top 12 public master's-granting universities in the Midwest, and for the second year, Eastern is ranked seventh and is the highest ranked Illinois school in the comprehensive master's category. This is an accomplishment for which all faculty and staff should take great pride.

We have all but completed our report for the reaccreditation process with the North Central Association. The report looks excellent, and we are fortunate to have excellent faculty, staff, and student members on the committees that wrote it. These committees were led splendidly by co-chairs: Dr. Robert Augustine and Dr. Jill Owen, and sub-committee chairs: Doctors Reed Benedict, Cheryl Noll, Shane Miller, Linda Simpson, and Linda Morford.

In the area of campus infrastructure, we finished two major construction projects last year with the completion of the Human Services Building and the addition to the Tarble Arts Center and are close to finishing a third project - a complete overhaul of our campus network infrastructure. The network infrastructure project is funded almost entirely from student fees and, when complete, will be a state-of-the-art technology system. Plus, in late February, the Governor released the funds for the addition to the Doudna Fine Arts Center, and the building is scheduled to go out for bids in October. In talking to representatives of the Capital Development Board, all signs indicate that they will meet this October deadline. While we also unfortunately lost a building last year with the Blair Hall fire, I compliment everyone for making the best of a most difficult situation. An architect has been hired, and we hope to be able to bid the reconstruction of Blair in late December or early January. At the September Board of Trustees meeting, I will request approval for the construction of a replacement roof. This is necessary to seal the building and will make interior reconstruction possible.

In just about every speech to the faculty, staff, and students, the topic of the budget seems to come up, so this would be an appropriate place to discuss it. We have a flat budget, which means we received the exact same appropriation this year from the State of Illinois as we received last year. I am happy with this only because it is not a cut. For the first time in three years we will not see a cut, and the Governor has publicly stated that we will not have a rescission during this year. This should, in no way, be seen as a windfall of new dollars because during the last several years, at the same time that we have experienced budget cuts, many costs have gone up, including utilities, library books and periodicals, gasoline, coal, personnel costs, and insurance. Even though we have received budget cuts, we have been able to operate. We have used two basic principles in guiding our decisions during these difficult budget years: 1) To continue to provide the best academic quality, and 2) To insure that students receive the classes they need to graduate in a timely manner. I believe that we are continuing to meet these goals, and we have done it despite the budget cuts in state appropriated dollars. We have met these objectives through reduction in non-teaching personnel, tuition increases, and increases in enrollment.

For the last two years we have held in reserve approximately 2 percent of the money received from the state in the event there would be a rescission. In both of the last two years there was such a rescission, and in both cases, very late in the fiscal year. As I stated earlier, Governor Blagojevich has agreed not to have a rescission for higher education this fiscal year. So, based on that assurance, we are planning to augment spending on the following:

1. Currently there are four vacancies in the University police department. The safety of our students, faculty, and staff is an important goal. Chief Adam Due has, therefore, been given permission to fill two of these positions.
2. We have a beautiful new library. Since I have been president, each student body president and speaker of the senate has posed the same question - "Can you keep the library open longer hours?" We are adding additional dollars in Dean Lanham's budget to be able to keep the library open an extra five hours per week, until 1 a.m. Sunday through Thursday, beginning the Tuesday

after Labor Day. Speaking of the library, our outstanding facility must have the most recent periodicals and books for students and faculty to use. Therefore, for the first time in several years, we will augment the budget of the Library by adding \$150,000 for additional acquisitions.

3. We will release at least \$1.2 million for much needed equipment. One million dollars will be used in Academic Affairs. It is my hope that the majority of these dollars will be used for instructional equipment. Approximately \$750,000 will be given to the Deans from the reserve set aside for past rescissions - the remaining money will come from equipment dollars that are already in divisional and vice presidential budgets.
4. Cuts in our deferred maintenance budget will not be necessary to cover our other needs. Some of you have already seen two of these projects as we were able to hire eight additional painters in late August for two months to paint much-needed areas on campus, and today we are repairing Seventh Street from Lincoln Avenue to Johnson and Johnson Street between Seventh and Ninth streets, and the Old Main Circle Drive.

I have every confidence that with these dollars not being cut from our budget we will have another outstanding academic year.

However, we have already begun planning our budget for the fiscal year that begins next July. We understand that there will be great challenges that higher education in Illinois will face in obtaining additional funding. There are limited state resources, with many agencies and constituencies competing for them. Throughout my entire career, I have believed that you can accomplish great things by working together. By working together, I believe we have a better opportunity to receive our share of these resources.

This is my fourth address to the faculty, and in each I indicated that academic decisions will be made by the Provost. I quote for you the statement I made two years ago, "As faculty members, you need to know that although I am the principal spokesman for the University - even on academic matters - I can assure you that all decisions involving academic policy or administration will involve Blair Lord, and it is highly unlikely that my recommendation to the Trustees on such matters will be contrary to his."

I am therefore asking Provost Lord to study and give me his recommendations in two areas that I believe are important.

It is my belief that universities need to be leaders in anticipating the needs of society. There is a tremendous nursing shortage in this country. Downstate Illinois and rural communities will suffer more than larger cities. Therefore, I am asking the Provost to study the feasibility of offering a nursing program at Eastern. By partnering with community colleges and others, we should be well positioned to offer such a program. I believe the need is such that the Illinois Board of Higher Education would be very receptive to granting additional dollars to support such a program. In addition, there are numerous federal programs for similar support.

I am also asking that we study the possibility of incorporating a service component in the curriculum. I am not suggesting that we require students to do volunteer work; however, volunteerism and community service is an important part of the educational process. I believe that students are blessed and sharing their knowledge and energy with others less fortunate both while they are in college and later as graduates is an important part of our goal of developing students who will become responsible citizens in a diverse world. An example of volunteerism - As I drove to work the Thursday before classes began, the day the residence halls officially opened for new freshmen, I saw literally hundreds of students wearing yellow and blue shirts which said "i am eiu," assisting parents and students checking into the residence halls. These students served without being paid. They volunteer because of their dedication to Eastern and the desire to help incoming students. They volunteered their time and energy to assist students with the move-in process. We received many letters and compliments from parents about the move-in process, and I heard many positive comments from the volunteers - they felt good knowing they were helping someone else who needed help. This is one example of volunteerism - there are many more too numerous to mention. But there are also many students who never volunteer. We must get these students more involved so they too can understand the joys of volunteering and helping others.

Again, welcome back, and I am hopeful that you will all have a great year. We have much to be proud of at EIU, and I am convinced that the future is bright for this great institution of higher education.